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THE ART OF MEMORY IN LATE MEDIEVAL CENTRAL EUROPE (CZECH LANDS, HUNGARY, POLAND)

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L'Harmattan
Budapest-Paris, 2016

ISBN 978-2-343-08252-3

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Via Degli Artisti 15
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Published with the support of
MTA–ELTE Research Group on Humanism in East Central Europe
OTKA PD-104316
Cover page: Křivoklát Castle, ms. 156, 73ᵛ–74ʳ
English proofreading: Rachel Hideg
Index of names prepared by Gábor Förköli

Publishing Director: Ádám Gyenes.

Volumes may be ordered, at a discount, from
L'Harmattan Könyvesbolt
H-1053 Budapest, Kossuth L. u. 14–16.
Tel.: +36-1-267-5979
harmattan@harmattan.hu
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H-1085 Budapest, Horánszky u. 20.
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Copy-edited by: Rachel Hideg
Page and type setting: György Madarász
Cover design: ???
Printing and binding: Robinco Ltd.
director: Péter Kecskeméthy

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their gratitude for the longstanding support of numerous individuals and institutions: Nicole Bériou (EHESS, Paris); Greti Dinkova-Bruun (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto); Christine Glassner and Maria Theisen (Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Vienna), Angelika Kemper (University of Klagenfurt); Stephen G. Nichols (Johns Hopkins University); Susanne Rischpler (Würzburg); Kimberly Rivers (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh); and Sabine Seelbach (University of Klagenfurt) have all helped us to tackle problems in both scientific and practical areas. We have also been helped by many institutions, including the Center for Theoretical Study (Prague), the Center for Medieval Studies (Bergen) and the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (Paris). Our particular gratitude goes to the holding libraries of our primary sources. We would also like to thank the following institutions for their generous support: two Charles University Research Development Programs undertaken at the Faculty of Humanities ("University Centre for the Study of Ancient and Medieval Intellectual Traditions" and "Phenomenology and Semiotics", PRVOUK 18) (for L. Doležalová), the OTKA Hungarian Research Fund (PD 104316, for F. G. Kiss); the Lise Meitner Foundation (for R. Wójcik); the International Visegrád Fund; and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (the project Innovative Scholarship for Digitized Medieval Manuscripts, for all three authors). The publication of this book was made possible by a "Lendület" grant from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Abbreviations

BJ: Biblioteka Jagiellońska (Jagiellonian Library), Cracow
BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
CCCM: *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout, Brepols)
CCSL: *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnhout, Brepols)
CSEL: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna-Salzburg)
f., ff.: folio, folios
GW: *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/)
Kap.: Archiv Pražského hradu, fond Knihovna metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta (Library of the Metropolitan Chapter), Prague
KNM: Knihovna Národního muzea (Library of the National Museum), Prague
MZK: Moravská zemská knihovna (Moravian Library), Brno
NK: Národni Knihovna (National Library), Prague
OSZK: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (National Széchényi Library), Budapest
ÖNB: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
PL: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (1841–1865)
PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny (Polish Dictionary of Biography), ed. Władysław Konopczyński et al., 50 Vols. (Warsaw-Cracow: PAN-PAU, 1935–) (http://ipsb.nina.gov.pl)
SB: Staatsbibliothek (State Library)
SS: *Słownik staropolski*
UL: University Library
VD16: *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts* (vd16.de) (Scientific Library)
VK: Vědecká knihovna, Olomouc

Contents

Introduction: the late medieval art of memory in East Central Europe

The art of memory, or *ars memorativa*, was transmitted as a unified system of rules that aided the orator to perform his speeches by heart at public fora. According to legend, the roots of the theory go back to the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries BC, although the first texts to describe it in detail date from Roman times: the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (3, 28–40) from the first century BC, probably written by Cornificius but attributed to Cicero up until the end of the fifteenth century; Cicero's work *On the Orator* (*De oratore*, 2, 86–90, 350–360); and the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian (11, 2, 11–51). The practice of the art is explained in greatest detail in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, thus most treatises on the subject in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are based on this work.[1] Memory may be natural or artificial. Natural memory has to be aided by artificial techniques, but both have fundamentally the same structure. We have to conceive of places (*loci*) in our minds, which generally have an architectonic shape: houses, palaces or cities. The best way to imagine a place is to recall an existing place that is otherwise well known to us. In this mental place, or map, we have to locate images (*imagines*) that can be associated somehow (metaphorically or metonymically) with the subjects we wish to memorize. When we want to recall these subjects, we need only walk past these places and scan (and decode) the images we located there one by one, in a well-preserved order.

The places (which we might also call "backgrounds") must be imagined as a stable structure that we can use and reuse several times. These backgrounds may remain unchanged for several occasions: one has merely to delete the images from the places, as if erasing the writing from a wax tablet, and attach new images to them. After establishing the fixed background, one must set up images that efficiently represent the subject to be remembered:

> And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns

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[1] On ancient mnemotechnics, see Harry Caplan, "Memoria: Treasure-House of Eloquence," in *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Rhetoric* (Cornell: Ithaca, 1970), 196–246; and Herwig Blum, *Die antike Mnemotechnik* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969).

> or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3, 22, 37)

Unlike the places (or backgrounds), images (*imagines*) have to be reinvented each time, and they must not seem familiar, conventional, or typical. They stick in our mind because of the evocative power of their abnormal, exceptional, unique features, and are therefore called "active images" (*imagines agentes*). A famous example from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is that of a man who is accused of poisoning someone for his inheritance, which is also testified to by witnesses. The *imago agens* for this situation should be a sick man, the defendant next to him, with a cup in his right hand and a wax tablet in his left. We should also place the testicles of a ram on his ring finger. Two polysemic puns aid the memory in this case: the double meaning of the Latin *testis* (both witness and testicle), which also refers to the inheritance, as Roman purses were often made from the scrotum of a ram.

It is important to note that the ancient art of memory was aimed at *memoria rerum* — that is, how to recall subjects from memory and how to give speeches from a thread of ideas. It was not intended primarily for *memoria verborum*, the word-by-word memorizing of texts. The art of memory was considered rather as an element of composition, a process of recreating and retelling an existing chain of ideas. Special rules also existed for the exact memorization of strange or foreign words and verses in medieval treatises, although this practice was generally characterized as exceptional and infrequent.[2]

A very important aspect of the art is order: the images associated with the parts of the speech or the elements of the text to be remembered have to be organized in a manner that excludes the possibility of confusion. Several methods exist for this purpose: one can put the images in a place, or places, that one knows thoroughly so as not to mix up the sequence of elements (familiar palaces or houses, or even a street leading from the main square of the town to its outskirts, or to the cemetery, to quote some medieval examples). Another method is to create an artificial,

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[2] The art of memory is often associated with oral poetry or the oral performance of vernacular poetry in scholarly literature. See e.g. Jody Enders, "Music, Delivery, and the Rhetoric of Memory in Guillaume de Machaut's *Remède de Fortune*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 107 (1992): 450–464. Attempts have been made to read the illustration cycles of troubadour manuscripts as memory images: Sylvia Huot, "Visualization and Memory: The Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript," *Gesta* 31 (1992): 3–14. However, there is no reference in ancient or medieval arts of memory to applying artificial memory to memorize poems, and the memorative functions of rhymes or other structural elements in poetry (e.g. refrains or recurring phrases) are not mentioned in the treatises known to us.

imaginary palace, or system of places, which can be completely arbitrary but must be carefully memorized (such as a system of places in which each place contains one animal and four craftsmen). A method that became very popular in the later Middle Ages creates this palace of places and images from the alphabet: each letter of the Latin alphabet includes five subcategories that can be used as images with the aid of attributes referring to the memorized object.

All our sources from Antiquity mention only the first method, based on houses and palaces that contain active images. From the sources known in the Middle Ages, the *De Oratore* of Cicero (2, 86–88, 350–360) and the *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* of Martian Capella (5, 538–539) mention the art of memory only perfunctorily, or with attention to a certain aspect, such as order, while the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian, which gives a detailed but unfavorable account of the technique (11, 2, 11–26), remained rather unpopular throughout the Middle Ages and was rediscovered in its entirety only in 1416 by Poggio Bracciolini.[3] There exists only one source, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which offered a lengthy, detailed and conveniently accessible description of the technique to readers in the High and Late Middle Ages.[4]

Evidently, with the decay of Roman oratorical culture, the focus of the art of memory shifted from delivering speeches to remembering what one had been told or what one had read (especially authorities), and the art of memory became an important tool for meditation. Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141) exerted the greatest influence in this direction. One of his major works, the *De tribus maximis circumstantiis*, begins with the statement that memory is a treasure-house where one should keep one's knowledge, after which he outlines the Herennian tradition of the art of memory. It is in his work that memory, and along with it the art of memory, becomes a tool for self-perfection leading to a moral change in humanity, since the source of morality is knowledge coming from Divine Wisdom. The mind must perfectly mirror a physical book in which knowledge is contained — and vice versa, the appearance of the book and the shape of the page must be a mirror image of the order created in the mind with the aid of

[3] Remigio Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici greci e latini nei secoli XIV e XV* (Florence: Sansoni, 1905), Vol. 2, 247–248; Leighton Reynolds and Nigel G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 137; Michael Winterbottom, "Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts of Quintilian," *Classical Quarterly* II, 17 (1967): 339–369; F. Murru, "Poggio Bracciolini e la riscoperta dell'Institutio oratoria del Quintiliano," *Critica storica* 20 (1983): 621–626; Alessandro Daneloni, *Poliziano e il testo dell'Institutio oratoria* (Messina: Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2001), 66–83.

[4] On the medieval tradition of the arts of memory, see Carruthers and Ziolkowski, eds., *Medieval Craft of Memory*, 18–19; and Mary Carruthers, "Rhetorical *memoria* in Commentary and Practice," in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. Virginia Cox, John O. Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 212.

memory.[5] The tradition of Hugh's meditative works had an important influence on later medieval treatises on the art of memory. For the rhetorician Boncompagno da Signa (c. 1170 to after 1240) of Bologna, any creature of the universe could serve as a structural memory aid, be it an architectural form, a building, a painting or a sculpture, as it is through the memorative function of the created world that God reminds us to remember him, and helps us in remembering.[6]

Compared to the arts of memory from the fifteenth century, the few surviving treatises on the subject from the fourteenth century, such as the *De memoria artificiali adquirenda* by Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1290–1349),[7] and the chapter on memorization in the *Art of Preaching* by Francesc Eiximenis (c. 1340–c. 1409),[8] rather attest to the general lack of interest in the art of memory in this century. Bradwardine's is the first representative of the technical type of treatise that became typical in the fifteenth century. Unlike the works of Hugh of St. Victor, the theoretical, philosophical, and theological references are limited in most treatises, and they focus instead on the technicalities of memorizing. Bradwardine's tract survives in only three fifteenth-century copies,[9] and it seems never to have left England. Similarly, the *Art of Preaching* by Francesc Eiximenis survives in only three copies, two of which are in East Central Europe, written in the second half of the fifteenth century and connected to the University of Cracow.[10]

The art of memory in Latin reached its heyday in the first decades of the fifteenth century, when a number of tracts suddenly appeared in Italy, and the fashion seems to have spread rapidly all over the continent, with the Council of

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[5] Grover A. Zinn, Jr., "Hugh of Saint Victor and the Art of Memory," *Viator* 5 (1974): 211–234; Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 46–79. On his Noah's Ark see Hugo de Sancto Victore, "Libellus de formatione arche," in: id., *De archa Noe pro archa sapientie cum archa Ecclesie et archa matris gratie. Libellus de formatione arche*, ed. Patrice Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 119–162; and Patrice Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux et exégèse visuelle. Le libellus de formatione arche de Hugues de Saint Victor* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993).

[6] Boncompagno da Signa, "Rhetorica novissima," in: *Bibliotheca Iuridica Medii Aevi, Scripta anecdota antiquissimorum glossatorum*, ed. Augusto Gaudenzi (Bologna: A. Gandolphi, 1892), Vol. 2, 247–297, here at p. 277; and Mary Carruthers, "Boncompagno at the Cutting Edge of Rhetoric: Rhetorical Memory and the Craft of Memory," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996): 44–64.

[7] Mary Carruthers, "Thomas Bradwardine: 'De Memoria Artificiali Adquirenda'," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 25–43.

[8] Kimberly Rivers, "Memory and Medieval Preaching: Mnemonic Advice in the 'Ars praedicandi' of Francesc Eiximenis," *Viator* 30 (1999): 253–284; and Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images and Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

[9] Although several authors have doubted the attribution of the treatise (cf. Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 159–160), no valid argument has yet been raised against his authorship. Indeed, the contents of the treatise itself closely resemble the later fifteenth-century arts of memory, although the reference to the Battle of Berwick (1333) suggests a contemporary, early fourteenth-century author, even if it was not Thomas Bradwardine.

[10] One of them is from Hungary, see below, p. 109. See P. Martí de Barcelona, "L'Ars praedicandi de Francesc Eiximenis," in: *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch* (Barcelona: s.t., 1936), Vol. 2, 301–340.

Constance, and especially the Council of Basel, apparently playing a not negligible role. The vogue lasted until the early days of the Protestant Reformation, and the *Congestorium artificiosae memoriae* (1520) of the Dominican Johann Host of Romberch establishes a convenient end date to this period of mnemonics.[11] Romberch's *Congestorium* gathered and amplified the contents of the most important earlier arts of memory on the one hand, and, on the other hand, served as inspiration for Lodovico Dolce's 1562 *Dialogo nel quale si ragione di accrescere e conservar la memoria* (Dialogue on how we can improve and conserve our memory), a treatise that introduced a more hermetic, more combinatory period in the history of the art of memory along with Camillo's *L'idea del teatro*.[12]

Most of the treatises from the fifteenth century focus on placing and recollecting memories in the mind, but deal less with their inventive usage. The concept of inventive recollection, as opposed to the informative recalling of data,[13] has far less relevance in these texts. The use of mnemonic devices is not aimed at the composition of a new series of pre-memorized ideas or expressions, but rather serves the oral performance of a set of ideas, laws, or definitions. Nevertheless, there are important exceptions to this tendency: some treatises give a detailed account of the techniques for creating a new sermon from a memorized series of citations of authorities,[14] while other treatises try to aid artificial meditation by offering a table of moral subjects that can be internalized and meditated on according to any creative order.[15] Furthermore, the influence of the mnemonic-combinatory teaching of Raymond Lull is also present in this period,[16] although to a much lesser extent than it was in the encyclopedic approaches to the art of memory around the turn of the seventeenth century.[17]

The period between the emergence of *artes memorativae* in around 1400 and their hermetic, combinatory reorientation after 1520 is marked by an important change: the introduction of printing to Europe by Johannes Gutenberg. The printing press altered the landscape of the art of memory: the first half of this period was characterized by the widespread circulation of anonymous manuscript treatises, in

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[11] The treatise of Romberch was written in 1513 and first printed in 1520 (Venice: Georgius de Rusconibus), but it became widely available only with the 1533 Venice edition by Melchior Sassa.

[12] On *L'idea del teatro*, see Lina Bolzoni, *Il teatro della memoria. Studi su Giulio Camillo* (Padova: Liviana, 1984); for his biography see Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce: Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 145–149.

[13] Developed by Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 234.

[14] See, for example, the *Nota hanc figuram…* a treatise described later on pp. 120–130.

[15] Such as the *Memoria fecunda* treatise: Pack, "An Ars".

[16] Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 166–170. See Raimundus Lullus, *Ars generalis ultima*, ed. Aloisius Madre, CCCM 75 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986); and Raimundus Lullus, *Ars brevis*, ed. and transl. Alexander Fidora (Hamburg: Meiner, 1999).

[17] On these, see Rossi, *Logic*; and Howard Hotson, *Johann Heinrich Alsted 1588–1638, Between Renaissance, Reformation and Universal Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

which the mnemonic tables varied from manuscript to manuscript according to the needs of the copyist, while chapters were lost and added during the different phases of the transmission of the text. Scribes often expropriated earlier authors, as we will see in the case of Matthaeus de Verona and Matouš Beran. After 1475, a number of itinerant humanists published short treatises on the subject, an occurrence that largely coincides with the Europe-wide availability of the printing press (1470).[18] The first printed arts of memory appeared around this date.[19] They were quickly followed by a number of treatises by new, and often barely known authors (such as Henricus Vibicetus, Christian Umhauser, Johannes Cusanus, or — to quote a Polish example — Jan Szklarek), who generally published their works in university cities (Paris, Cologne, Bologna, Basel, Leipzig, Erfurt, Ingolstadt, Vienna, Cracow). These texts are not more original than their manuscript precedents, but they often contain important illustrative material (woodcuts or tables) that the scribes of the manuscripts usually failed to copy.

Despite the similarity in mnemonic techniques, each text is worth examination because of the fascinating variety of associative methods that are suggested in these books. Through the mirror of these creative associations, the average cleric and university student seems to be much more of an original thinker, with a more vivid imagination than one would commonly suppose. As is well known, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* suggests that one should create humorous, horrible or atrocious associations, and his late medieval followers interpreted the notion of humor widely and boldly. The humanistic commentary on the *Ad Herennium* by Francesco Maturanzio suggests remembering a clown, a fool, or a monkey playing the violin.[20] Such ridiculous or cruel images could be developed into small and rather daring scenes. A probably early version of the *Memoria fecunda* treatise creates an entire sequence of cruel imagination: "Andrew should hold an amphora,

[18] Cf. the important article by Paul Needham, "Prints in the Early Printing Shops," in *The Woodcut in 15th Century Europe*, ed. Peter Parshall (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2009), 39–91.

[19] The *Quemadmodum intellectus scientiis illuminatur…* was published in the *Ars et modus vitae contemplativae* (Nürnberg: Creussner, 1473), and the first version of the art of memory by Jacobus Publicius was probably printed in Toulouse around 1475–76. The latter (*Jacobi Publitii in art memorie prologus incipit feliciter*) survives in a unique copy in Paris (Bibl. Mazarine, Inc. 618). Unfortunately, it bears neither printer's mark nor date. Its types are very similar to the *Iacobii Publicii epistolarum institutiones incipiunt feliciter* (London, British Library IA 42476), which is also dated in Toulouse in c. 1475. The first "Blockbuch" editions of the *Ars memorandi notabilis per figuras ewangelistarum* are dated to around 1465–1470. See Susanne Rischpler, "Gedruckt und gezeichnet. Das Blockbuch 'Ars memorandi' und seine handschriftlichen Zeugen," in *Blockbücher des 15. Jahrhunderts. Eine Experimentierphase im frühen Buchdruck. Beiträge der Fachtagung in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München am 16. und 17. Februar 2012*, ed. Bettina Wagner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 215–254. See also Rafał Wójcik, "Masters, Pupils, Friends and Thieves: A Fashion of ars memorativa in the Environment of Early German Humanists," *Daphnis* 41 (2012): 399–418.

[20] M. T. Cicero, *Rhetoricorum libri cum tribus commentis*, ed. Franciscus Maturantius Perusinus (Venice: Philippus Pincius, 1496), f. 82r (Budapest UL, Inc. 575).

as if he desperately wanted to drink, but he puts the bottle to his mouth clumsily and knocks out several teeth, hurting his tongue and his gums at the same time. He then spits out blood along with teeth and bits of his tongue, dripping blood on himself. This makes him angry and he throws the amphora at the wall, but it bounces back and pierces his stomach."[21] Christian Umhauser, the author of a German treatise from around 1500, proposes that to memorize a medicine we should imagine a well-known doctor, dressed in wonderful clothes, who holds an ampule of urine in his hand that he pours over an old lady.[22] *Haec est pulchra imago* (This is a beautiful image!), as the author comments. Giovanni Michele Alberto Carrara, an Italian humanist from Bergamo from the second half of the fifteenth century, advises, quoting Avicenna, that we should set up images of pretty girls whose names start with the same letter as the thing to be remembered. His example of amusing or moving images is that if we want to memorize something connected to Antonius we must imagine one of our friends named Anthony whose head is being chewed by an ass with rabies, and who, with blood spurting out, is asking desperately for help.[23]

It seems undeniable that the later Middle Ages, and especially the early fifteenth century, experienced an unprecedented growth in the popularity of treatises on the art of memory. The reason for this sudden increase in the number of copied manuscripts has been the subject of scholarly debate. Frances A. Yates attempted to explain the sudden flourishing of this type of literature by the change that occurred in the notion of memory in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas.

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[21] "Andreas capiat amforam volens vehementer bibere et eam cum tanta importunitate in os suum trudat ut plures dentes evellat linguamque cum dentina crudeliter vulneret, quo facto expuat sanguinem cum dentibus et partibus linguae ita ut seipsum turpiter maculet, et sic iratus proiciat anforam contra murum, que resiliens intret ventrem suum." Berlin, SB, ms. germ. qu. 1522, f. 282^{v}. This manuscript contains a probably early variant of the *Memoria fecunda* treatise, which significantly differs from the version published by Pack, "An Ars".

[22] "Imago (ut antea dixi) est similitudo et figura et significatio rei, quam volumus locis tradere. Verbi gratia, si vellem commemorare medicinam, ad locum constituo medicum mihi cognitum mirabili veste indutum urinale in manu habens et urina vetulam respergens. Hec est pulchra imago. In ordine regula: Imagines debent esse rarae, mirabiles, inusitatae, ridiculae, quia natura usitata re non exsuscitatur et debemus eis attribuere egregiam pulchritudinem aut unicam turpitudinem si aliquas exornabimus aut corona aut veste, tunc cruentam aut steno oblitas inducamus." Munich, BSB, clm. 4417f, f. 3^{r-v}. Interestingly, this quotation does not appear in the printed, significantly altered edition of the text, cp. Christian Umhauser, *Ars memoratiua S. Thome, Ciceronis, Qunitiliani, Petri Rauenne* (Nürnberg: Ambrosius Hueber, 1501), f. 2^{r}.

[23] Giovanni Michele Alberto Carrara, *De omnibus ingeniis augendae memoriae* (Bologna: Plato de Benedictis, 1491), f. a5^{r}: "Ut risum moveat figura, aut misericordiam aut admirationem, haec enim facit etiam puellas recordari, ut inquit Avicenna sexto naturalium particula quarta. Facile enim invenitur quaesita figura quae affectum animae commoverit. Exemplum hoc est: in ore asini rabidi caput Antonii constituam morsibus fere ossa confringi, cruorem effluere, illum auxilia petere, et passis palmis vociferare. Fieri non poterit, ut cum voluero, non videam hunc oculis mentis meae, et reddere Antonium nesciam repetenti."

When Aquinas outlined the system of virtues in the *Summa theologiae* on the basis of Aristotle's ethics, he complemented the traditional elements of the virtue of Prudence with memory, which he borrowed from Cicero's rhetorical work *De inventione*.[24] Thus, according to Yates, memory, which was previously regarded as a subject of rhetoric, now gained importance and was considered as a part of ethics, which stood higher in the hierarchy of sciences.

However, according to our present knowledge it is only in the fifteenth century that these kinds of treatises proliferated and became present in almost every area of Europe. Important treatises on the subject survive from the previous two and a half centuries between Thomas Aquinas and the fifteenth century, but they are scarce compared to the fifty-six treatises that Sabine Heimann-Seelbach found while investigating only the tradition of the art of memory in the fifteenth century. These treatises survive in more than two hundred and fifty manuscripts and at least fifteen incunabulum prints in total.[25] Moreover, a completely new genre, the pictorial mnemonic Bible, appeared both in manuscript and in print in numerous copies.[26]

Another idea put forward by Yates[27] and recently taken up by Sabine Heimann-Seelbach[28], concerns the possible influence of Greek scholars who arrived in Italy from Byzantium in around 1400. According to ancient accounts, artificial memory aids had been invented by the Greek Simonides, thus it would have been no surprise if the Byzantine Greeks had reintroduced them to Italy. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* explicitly mentions the Greek arts of memory in Antiquity, and differentiates them from the Latin practice:

> I know that most of the Greeks who have written on the memory have taken the course of listing images that correspond to a great many words, so that persons who wished to learn these images by heart would have them ready without expending effort on a search for them. I disapprove of their method on several grounds. First, among the innumerable multitude of words it is

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[24] Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 73–76, 82–83. On the importance of the commentary of Marius Victorinus on the *De inventione* in these changes, see Carruthers (cf. note 4), "Rhetorical *memoria*," 215–217.

[25] To this number should be added the number of copies of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which made available the same mnemonic teachings. In this case, of course, the evidence is ambiguous, as the copyists and owners of that treatise were not necessarily interested in the art of memory. See also *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance*, ed. Virginia Cox and John Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[26] Rischpler, *Biblia Sacra*.

[27] Frances Yates, "Ludovico da Pirano's Memory Treatise," in *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance. Essays in Honour of P. O. Kristeller*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press/Zambelli, 1976), 111–122.

[28] Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 417–433.

> ridiculous to collect images for a thousand. How meagre is the value these can have, when out of the infinite store of words we shall need to remember now one, and now another? Secondly, why do we wish to rob anybody of his initiative, so that, to save him from making any search himself, we deliver to him everything searched out and ready? Then again, one person is more struck by one likeness, and another more by another. Often in fact when we declare that some one form resembles another, we fail to receive universal assent, because things seem different to different persons. The same is true with respect to images: one that is well defined to us appears relatively inconspicuous to others.[29]

Obviously, this negative approach to the Greek art of memory did not encourage the acceptance of Hellenic wisdom in this field. Furthermore, we do not know of a single Byzantine art of memory that would have transmitted the method of places and images that became so popular in the Latin West in the fifteenth century.[30] Even more disturbing is the fact that the treatise attributed to Thomas Bradwardine probably, and the *Art of Preaching* of Francesc Eiximenis certainly, antedate the possible arrival of Greek scholars in Italy.[31]

The sudden popularity of these types of texts from the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards cannot possibly be explained by only one factor. Around the year 1400 the number of students studying at universities grew significantly. Higher-level studies became widespread in Germany, where several new universities were founded throughout the century (Heidelberg 1386, Cologne 1388, Erfurt 1392, Leipzig 1409, Rostock 1419, Greifswald 1456, Freiburg im Breisgau 1457, Ingolstadt 1472, Mainz 1477, Tübingen 1477, Frankfurt an der Oder 1506). The Central European universities that were founded in the middle of the fourteenth century (Prague 1348, Cracow 1364, Vienna 1365) — despite the initial backlash — had to be re-founded at the turn of the century because of growing demand (Vienna 1384, Cracow 1400), and even Prague, which came under Hussite influence from 1409, reached a wider public than before in the early fifteenth century.[32] These institutions educated the target audience for the *ars memorativa*. As Johann Romberch wrote in 1520, it was an art most necessary for "all the theologians, preachers, confessors, lawyers, judges, procurators, advocates, notaries, physicians, philosophers, students of the liberal arts, moreover merchants, messengers, and

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[29] *Ad C. Herennium: De ratione dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*, transl. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb, 1954), 235.

[30] As Herwig Blum notes, we do not know of any such word lists as those quoted in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Id., *Die antike Mnemotechnik* (Olms: Hildesheim, 1969), 122.

[31] In his recension of the book of Sabine Heimann-Seelbach, Frank Fürbeth also sees the theory of Greek origin as weak: *Arbitrium* 21 (2003): 295–300.

[32] For details, see Rainer C. Schwinges, *Deutsche Universitätsbesucher im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Alten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1986).

couriers."[33] The spread of university education necessitated the massive reproduction of books, excerpts, miscellanies, and other forms of epitomized knowledge — including the art of memory. At the same time, these new educational institutions provided a larger public for the art of memory and facilitated the circulation of such treatises in university circles, a fact that is mirrored in the number of treatises edited or copied at universities.

As far as we know, the art of memory never became an official part of any university curricula, and it was taught *privatim*, among other minor but useful subjects as *ars epistolandi* (letter writing), *algorismus* (counting with Arabic numbers in the decimal system), and *arbor consanguinitatis et affinitatis* (the degrees of family relations for legal purposes). The larger student body present at the universities now proved to be a sufficient audience for traveling teachers of these subjects, who spent one or two semesters teaching in one place (and in certain cases studying other subjects at the same time), then traveled further around Europe. This was the case with Jacobus Publicius, Conrad Celtis, Thomas Murner and Johannes Cusanus in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Many of the treatises on the art of memory in the fifteenth century are connected to university environments, or directly to teachers at universities in both Western Europe (the *Memoria fecunda* treatise, written in Bologna in 1425;[34] the *Artificiosa memoria secundum Parisienses*;[35] the different forms of the *ars memorativa* of Jacobus Publicius;[36] the treatise of Henricus Vibicetus at the University of Cologne from 1500;[37] or the short treatise of Pedro Ciruelo on the art of memory from Alcalá in the early sixteenth century[38]) and East Central Europe (Matouš Beran at the University of Erfurt, Martinus Pragensis at the University of Prague, Stanisław Korzybski, Antoni of Radomsko, Conrad Celtis, Jan Szklarek, Thomas Murner, and Cusanus in Cracow — the last also taught in Vienna, among other universities).

The sudden shift to mass education at universities changed the forms of scholarly discourse as well, and professors began to write shorter, more specialized treatises instead of the longer, more comprehensive works. Daniel Hobbins calls

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[33] See the title page of the *Congestorium artificiose memorie*, 1520 (Venice: Georgius de Rusconibus), 1r: "opus omnibus theologis, predicatoribus et confessoribus, iuristis, iudicibus, procuratoribus, advocatis et notariis, medicis, philosophis, artium liberalium professoribus, insuper mercatoribus, nunciis et tabellariis pernecessarium."

[34] Pack, "An Ars".

[35] Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 46–50.

[36] The final form can be read in English translation in Carruthers and Ziolkowski, eds., *Medieval Craft of Memory*, 226–254.

[37] Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 61–64; and the introduction to Johannes Cusanus below, pp. 303–310.

[38] Cirilo Flórez Miguel, "Pedro Ciruelo y el arte renacentista de la memoria," in: *Homenaje a Pedro Sainz Rodriguez* (Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Española, 1986), Vol. 1, 283–294.

this new type of scholarly treatise "the late medieval tract."[39] Treatises on the art of memory ranked lower in academic prestige than treatises on theology or the subjects taught at the faculty of arts: its professors remained external lecturers (*professores extranei*) throughout their careers and their teaching was only occasionally recorded in university acts. These texts were therefore presumably considered as study aids rather than serious scholarship. The popularity of such condensed forms of educational texts nevertheless helped the circulation of the *ars memorativa*.

"*Cellula quae meminit est cellula deliciarum*" — "a little cell that remembers is a chamber of pleasure", wrote Geoffrey of Vinsauf in his popular treatise on poetics, the *Poetria nova*, and his advice was often followed in monasteries and convents.[40] Several manuscripts on the art of memory reveal monastic origins, especially in Central and East Central Europe. The number of treatises and copies coming from the Franciscan environment hints at another important factor behind the spread of the art of memory. A new style of preaching emerged among the Franciscans, and especially among the Observants, introduced by Saint Bernardino of Siena, who made extensive use of rhetorical tools to influence his audience.[41] These included the alphabetical segmentation of the text and the use of lively metaphorical images and symbol-like mnemonic structures, which resembled the techniques of the art of memory. Saint Bernardino of Siena refers to the art of memory several times in his vernacular preaching,[42] and he even explains its rules to his public twice,

[39] Daniel Hobbins, "The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1308–1337.

[40] Leonard Huntpichler, writing in Vienna in the 1450s, cited this sentence from Geoffrey of Vinsauf in his *Rethorica* written for Central European Dominicans. See ms. Wrocław, University Library I. Q. 475, 11v: "Absque memoria in nulla scientia aliquis potest esse peritus, sed propterea rhetorice applicatur quia maxime est necessaria oratori, plurimum enim ad persuadendum proficiet. […] sed studeat frequenter, animo tamen leto, nam cellula quae meminit est cellula deliciarum, delicias non tedia querit. Distingat quoque, partes accipiat eorum que voluit memorie commendare. Sunt autem a magistris tradite regule memorandi per loca et imagines quibus ea quae memoranda sunt convenienter locentur. Sed quaedam aliis, alia vero aliis placent. […] Poterit autem quibus eligere signa sua aut in manu aut in presente pariete, aut in libro per que ad reminiscendum sua memoria moveatur. Super omnia autem valet assiduitas…" On the attitude of Geoffrey of Vinsauf to the art of memory, see Mieczysław Mejor, "Ars Versificandi and Ars Memorativa: Geoffrey of Vinsauf on the Art of Memory," in *Culture of Memory,* ed. Wójcik, 79–86.

[41] Cf. Carlo Delcorno, "L'Osservanza francescana e il rinnovamento della predicazione," in: *I frati osservanti e la società in Italia nel secolo XV. Atti del XL convegno internazionale in occasione del 550o anniversario della fondazione del Monte di pietà di Perugia*, (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sul Medio Evo, 2013), 3–54 and Carolyn Muessig, "Bernardino da Siena and Observant Preaching as a Vehicle of Religious Transformation," in: *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, ed. James D. Mixson, Bert Roest, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 203.

[42] Carlo Delcorno, "L'«ars praedicandi» di Bernardino da Siena," *Lettere italiane* 32 (1980): 453–454.

in order to prepare them better for confession. On another occasion he relates the example of a rich but unlettered peasant, who studied the twenty sentences of the Lord's Prayer by attaching the image of his twenty debtors to each sentence. "This is almost the art of memory," says Saint Bernardino. His affective and emotional style of preaching created a school among Observant Franciscans (John Capistrano, Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce, Jacopo delle Marche), which quickly spread to Central Europe, as the Italian preachers sent out to preach against heretic movements, Jews, and Turks reached Hungary and Poland. A parallel might easily be drawn between the tendency of the Franciscans to preach with the "imaginative" (that is, using gripping images) and the creative imaging techniques of the art of memory. Almost all the treatises on the art of memory surviving from Poland can be connected to Observant preachers: Stanisław Korzybski, who taught the subject at the University of Cracow in 1470; Paulinus of Skalbmierz (†1498); Jan Szklarek (who published his *Opusculum de arte memorativa* in 1504 but started to teach in 1474); and the *Modus reponendi sermones*, an anonymous treatise from around 1507. We know of another treatise by Antoni of Radomsko that did not survive. The Franciscan use of images and other mnemonic devices as tools of persuasion and discipline coincides with the practice of the art of memory, as seen in the case of Johannes Sintram in the first half of the fifteenth century,[43] and Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg at the turn of the sixteenth century.[44]

Another important factor in the fifteenth-century popularity of the art of memory was its applicability to meditative and devotional practice. The stress of the *ars memorativa* on the spatial visualization of mental structures closely resembles the use of visual patterns in devotion. Its imaginative techniques — for example the creation of places (*loci*) in existing sacral spaces (churches, cemeteries, cities, or pilgrim routes), or the use of symbolic images (such as the bull or the eagle for the Gospels) — recall the widespread use of such elements in meditative treatises from Hugh of St. Victor onwards. The meditative techniques developed by Wessel Gansfort and Jean Mombaer, representatives of the Modern Devotion movement in the second half of the fifteenth century, bear close resemblance to the image-

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[43] Kimberly Rivers, "Writing the Memory of the Virtues and Vices in Johannes Sintram's (d. 1450) Preaching Aids," in: *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31–48.

[44] Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, Des hochgelerten doctor Keiserspergs *Alphabet in XXIII Predigen so er gethon und die geordnet hat an einem baum. XXIII. est uffzesteigen zu ewigem leben gut gelesen und dauon man wol gebessert mag warden* (Strasbourg, Joannes Grieninger, 1518). Used copy: Hungarian National Library, Ant. 548. On him, see Herbert Kraume, "Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg," in *Verfasserlexikon*, Vol. 2, 1141–1152. Geiler often used mnemotechnical images in his preaching both for ecclesiastical teaching and for entertainment.

based ordering methods of the art of memory.[45] Moreover, the circulation of treatises on *ars memorativa* was often connected to monastic reform movements, as has been demonstrated in the case of the Melk Reform.[46] Peter of Rosenheim, a central figure in the Melk Benedictine reform movement, was personally responsible for a mnemonic summary of the Bible. Benedictines in the Salzburg Archabbey were active in applying the art of memory to their meditative practice.[47]

Due to these factors, the popularity of the art of memory cannot easily be connected to the spread of humanism. The *ars memorativa*, used by university students to mug up on the *Decretals* and advocated by Franciscan friars to spread the word of God, could not elicit a unanimously positive response in humanistic circles. Under the guise of Thomas Klorbius, a fictional theologian of the early sixteenth century, the art of memory was ironically exposed as an important element of late medieval scholastic culture and parodied along with the typical targets of humanist mockery (scholasticism, Scotism, rudimentary knowledge of grammar) in the second part of the *Letters of Obscure Men* (1517):

> You have recently mentioned in a letter our theologian as being well lettered, and a Doctor of long standing, and a profound Scotist, and deeply versed in the *Book of Sentences*. You also averred that he had conned by rote the whole book of the Holy Doctor *Of Entity and Essence*, and that he knew *The Fortress of Faith* like his paternoster, and that by memorative art he had impressed the *Formalities* of Scotus upon his mind like so much wax; and finally, you alleged that he was 'a member of ten universities.'[48]

Ulrich von Hutten, the most probable candidate for the authorship of the second part of the *Letters of Obscure Men*, considered the art of memory as a characteristic

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[45] This is especially true of the *Rosetum exercitiorum spiritualium et sacrarum meditationum* of Jean Mombaer (Johannes Mauburnus), first published in 1494, in which he discusses meditative practices bound to imagined sacral spaces such as churches. See Pierre Debongnie, *Jean Mombaer de Bruxelles, abbé de Livry. Ses écrits et ses réformes* (Louvain-Toulouse: Uystpruyst, 1927); and Sara Ritchey, "Wessel Gansfort, John Mombaer, and Medieval Technologies of the Self: Affective Meditation in a Fifteenth-Century Emotional Community," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 38 (2013): 153–166.

[46] For mnemonic manuscripts of monastic (esp. Benedictine) provenance, see Susanne Rischpler, "Spätmittelalterliche Mnemotechnik im Kontext von Konzil und Melker Reform," in *Wissenspaläste. Räume des Wissens in der Vormoderne*, ed. Gesine Mierke and Christoph Fasbender (Würzburg: Königshausen&Neumann, 2013), 10–41.

[47] See Kiss, "Performing," 421–422.

[48] *Epistolae obscurorum virorum: the Latin text with an English rendering*, ed. Francis Stokes (London: Chatto&Windus, 1925), 426. "Vos nuper scripsistis in uno dictamine de uno Magistro nostro, quod est valde doctus, et est Doctor multorum annorum, et est profundus Scotista: et est valde cursivus in libris sententiarum: etiam scit mentetenus totum librum Doctoris sancti de ente et essentia, et Fortalitium fidei est ei sicut pater noster, et per artem memorativam impressit sibi formalitates Scoti, sicut ceram, et ultimo scribitis, quod est membrum decem Universitatum."

accessory of scholastic learning, and a parallel can easily be drawn between his attitude and Erasmus's rejection of this technique.[49] Although the art of memory was ridiculed by the most famous humanists of the second decade of the sixteenth century, it was a popular subject that even the "German arch-humanist" Conrad Celtis had deigned worthy of attention a few decades earlier. Although we do not find any prominent Italian humanists among the authors of the treatises, a number of important philologists, including Marcantonio Sabellico, professor at the University of Padua, attested to the usefulness of the art of memory in their writings. After general praise of memory, Sabellico says that memory can indeed be improved by artificial techniques.[50] It was accepted even more warmly by court humanists if a member of a princely family indulged in the art: in the *Artificialis memoriae regulae* of Jacopus de Ragona, the author mentions in his dedication to his humanist patron, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (c. 1395–1444), that they had spent several days practicing the art of memory.[51] In a similar tone, the renowned humanist author Angelo Camillo Decembrio recounts how court intellectuals celebrated the Duke of Ferrara, Leonello d'Este (†1450), for having studied mnemonics with Tommaso Morroni di Rieti (Thomas Reatinus).[52] Unfortunately, we do not know Tommaso Morroni's teaching on the art of memory, but he must have won over the duke as he was knighted for his services, earning him the envy of several humanists, including Poggio Bracciolini.[53] All these cases demonstrate an ambiguous attitude towards the art of memory on the part of the humanists: on the one hand it seems that no significant humanist scholar wrote

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[49] See, e.g., Rossi, *Logic*, 2–6.

[50] "Est hec thesaurus disciplinarum omnium artiumque studio et labore quesitarum custos fidelissima. aliquid certe vidit sapiens poeta qui Musarum memoriam dixit matrem nec minus, qui Lethen, que huic contraria est, apud inferos statuit. constat id bonum nature beneficio, auget tamen et excolitur arte" (*Exempla*, lib. 10, cap. 9). Later on, Sabellicus quotes the example of Antonio da Ravenna who could state several thousand things in the correct order, but it was through an artificial technique: "sed hec artificij sunt, non nature." See Marcus Antonius Sabellicus, *Exempla Sabellici* (Lipsiae: Wolfgang Monacensis, 1513), f. 113^{r}.

[51] "Iussu tuo princeps Illustrissime artificialis memoriae regulas quo ordine illas *superioribus diebus simul exercuimus*, hunc in libellum reduxi, tuoque nomini dicaui." London, British Library, ms. Add. 10.438, 2^{r} (dated "tertio Nonas Septembris 1434"). Interestingly, other copies contain a different dating, cf. Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*, 25.

[52] Angelo Camillo Decembrio, *De Politia Litteraria*, ed. Norbert Witten (Leipzig: KG Saur, 2002), 157 (Bk. 1, ch. 3, 24). Tommaso Morroni's knowledge of the art of memory is mentioned several times in this dialogue, although without any specific details (cf. ibid., 145, 171). For further details about the life of this interesting figure see Arnaldo Segarizzi, "Per Tommaso Morroni," *Rassegna bibliografica della letteratura italiana* 6 (1898): 325–327; and Bice Boralevi, "Di alcuni scritti inediti di Tommaso Morroni da Rieti," *Bolletino del R. Deputazione di Storia Patria, per l'Umbria* 17 (1911): 535–614 (esp. 598–599), according to which Morroni could extemporize on any subject in poetry or prose.

[53] This affair actually prompted Poggio Bracciolini to write his treatise on "true nobility." Cf. Ernst Walser, *Poggius Florentinus, Leben und Werke* (Berlin-Leipzig: Teubner, 1914), 191–194.

on this subject,[54] and that they were rather suspicious of its non-natural, mechanical approach to language and knowledge; on the other hand, they were tolerant towards the success of an art already known in Antiquity, especially when it was supported by a wealthy patron.

On a wider note, medial changes that increase the accessibility of privileged cultural goods generally trigger an instinct for collection in the communities in which they occur. All the factors mentioned above — universities, preaching, monastic devotion — (coupled with the humanists' tacit support for the art) may be sufficient to explain the growing fashion among fifteenth-century intellectuals of using imaginative techniques to memorize massive amounts of facts and citations. Nevertheless, on a more abstract level we might also add to these the impact of the medial changes that occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As the sheer quantity of knowledge that was accessible to an individual grew with the triumph of paper manuscripts (from the thirteenth century) and with the invention of the printing press (from the mid-fifteenth century), so the need to systemize, digest, and appropriate this freshly acquired material increased. In fact, a parallel can be drawn between the popularity of mnemonic arts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the late medieval and Early Modern expansion of "commonplace reading," which was a similar effort to cope with the extensive fields of knowledge that had suddenly become accessible to far wider circles than before.[55] As the art of memory provided a tool for memorizing hundreds of legal decrees (e.g. the card play of Thomas Murner) or theological statements (e.g. the *Nota hanc figuram* treatise),[56] so personal miscellanies and collections of commonplaces were created and organized to bring order to the disorderly heap of knowledge. We might interpret the overwhelming success of the art of memory in the fifteenth century as a symptom of dealing with a "post-scarcity economy of knowledge": as scholarly knowledge became more accessible than ever before, readers became more avid collectors of scholarly content. An obvious present-day parallel here is the advent of the Internet era, which has prompted many of us to collect a previ-

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[54] Conrad Celtis' exception rather proves the rule: Conrad Celtis published his treatise early, at the start of his career (1492), and the text probably reflects his extracurricular teaching at the University of Cracow, while he was studying for a degree there. George of Trebizond's *Rhetoricorum libri V* contains a detailed account of the art of memory with a very theoretical outlook. See Luis Merino-Jerez, "Retórica y Artes memoriae: la memoria en los Rhetoricorum libri quinque de Jorge de Trebisonda," in *Pectora mulcet. Estudios de Retórica y Oratoria latinas*, eds. Trinidad Arcos-Pereira et al., (Logroño : Instituto de Estudios Riojanos), 2009, 983–993. His categorizations resemble the theories of imposition exposed by Leonardo Giustiniani (*impositio, transumptio, gestus*, etc.) and Lodovico da Pirano (*aliud in toto simile, aliud in toto dissimile, aliud partim simile*).

[55] On commonplace reading and collecting in the Early Modern era, see Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know. Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

[56] See below, pp. 76–80 and 120–130.

ously unimaginable quantity of books, films, music and other cultural goods in digital format.[57] Mnemonic Bibles and memorized collections of citations provided their users with a readily applicable treasure trove of useful information, just as encyclopedias and commonplace collections did, with the significant difference of not having been written, but rather inculcated. Furthermore, these mnemonic practices contributed to the classification and segmentation of the available scholarly knowledge, a role that similarly has its parallel in modern scientific research.[58]

The history of the art of memory has been the focus of continuous scholarly research since at least the early nineteenth century. Johann Christoph Frh. von Aretin was the first to devote an entire book to the history of this technique in 1810.[59] As an enlightened aristocrat, his main interest in the subject centered on the pedagogical use of the art of memory among the wider population. Nevertheless, von Aretin had a deep interest in history, and during the time of the secularization of the Bavarian monasteries (1802–1803) he was in charge of the transfer of monastic book collections to the court library in Munich. He thus had first-hand acquaintance with the fifteenth-century manuscript material on mnemonics precisely in Bavaria, where the late medieval art of memory probably had the greatest influence in all Europe, and he described some of the unpublished texts he found in his monograph.

After von Aretin's initial advances in this field, the manuscript material remained largely untouched by researchers until the fundamental work of Ludwig Volkmann, who was the first to call attention to the rich pictorial material connected to the art of memory.[60] However, the subject proved too literary for art historians and too pictorial for literary scholars, thus it remained a neglected field until the early 1960s when two scholars, Paolo Rossi and Frances Yates, almost simultaneously called attention to its importance to the history of ideas and philosophy.[61] While Paolo Rossi focused more on the combinatorial aspects of artificial memory and its influence as a language of signs on the rhetoric and philosophy

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[57] On the collecting passions triggered by the Internet era, see *Collecting and the Internet: Essays on the Pursuit of Old Passions through New Technologies*, ed. Susan Koppelman and Alison Franks (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2008).

[58] Geoffrey Bowker called attention to the classificatory role of archiving and recording: "What is stored in the archive is not facts, but *disaggregated classifications that can at will be* reassembled to take the form of facts about the world." Geoffrey C. Bowker, *Memory Practices in the Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005), 18. Lucie Doležalová has called attention to the mnemonic and cognitive role of order in her "Ordnen des Gedächtnisses: das Verzeichnis als Raum des Wissens in der Vormoderne," in *Wissenspaläste. Räume des Wissens in der Vormoderne*, ed. Gesine Mierke and Christoph Fasbender (Würzburg: Königshausen&Neumann, 2013), 42–77.

[59] *Systematische Anleitung zur Theorie und Praxis der Mnemonik* (Sulzbach: Seidel, 1810).

[60] Volkmann, "Ars Memorativa". In addition to his work on the art of memory, Volkmann founded the systematic study of Renaissance hieroglyphics and emblematics (*Bilderschriften der Renaissance*, 1923).

[61] See Rossi, *Logic* and Yates, *Art of memory*.

of the thinkers who applied it, Frances Yates concentrated on the concept of the hermetic recreation of the universe in the sixteenth-century art of memory. Their research refers only in passing to the manuscript tradition of the fifteenth-century arts of memory that were diffused in monastic and university circles, and despite the enormous influence their work had on Renaissance scholarship, the evolution of the *ars memorativa* in fifteenth-century Europe remained untouched for a long time.

Memory again became a fashionable interpretative concept of human history in the early 1990s. Within the general framework of cultural memory (Jan Assmann) or commemorative places (*les lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora), the concept of historical memory has been applied to a great many different fields, from anthropology to archeology.[62] The art of memory as a technique became a central notion in interpreting the medieval procedures of reading and meditation in *The Book of Memory* by Mary Carruthers (1990), who called attention to the inventive, creative element in the medieval *ars memorativa*. Lina Bolzoni[63] systematically applied the theoretical concept of places and images in interpreting late medieval and Renaissance pictorial representations as palaces of memory according to the terminology of the art of memory.[64]

The field of manuscript *artes memorativae* from the fifteenth century nevertheless remained unexplored, despite some earlier, scattered efforts.[65] Sabine Heimann-Seelbach was the first to survey the immense amount of codex material surviving from this age (more than 200 manuscripts, with important textual variants in almost each of them) and to attempt to clarify the complicated ramifications of the textual tradition of these treatises, which often contain very similar theoretical material but can be very different in their actual form and structure.[66] Her work concentrates on two larger geographical areas of Europe — Italy and Germany (including Austria) — where the art of memory was probably the most influential throughout the fifteenth century. France is represented by far fewer manuscripts than any of these, partly because of the early presence of printed arts of memory there (already from 1475–76), and partly because of the difficulties involved in looking for short, anonymous texts in French catalogs of manuscripts. England seems to have remained relatively untouched by the wave of artificial memory in

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[62] See David C. Berliner, "The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2005): 197–211.

[63] *La stanza della memoria* (Turin: Einaudi 1995); *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena* (Turin: Einaudi, 2002).

[64] This approach has been criticized by Peter Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion," *Art Bulletin* 81 (1999): 456–472, esp. 460–462, who claims that this parallel is undermined by the uniqueness and personal appropriation that ancient rhetoric required from mnemonic images.

[65] Especially by Pack, "An Ars".

[66] Heimann-Seelbach, *Ars und scientia*.

the fifteenth century, while Spain is still a *terra incognita* in this respect.[67] Nevertheless, the fashion of the art of memory appears to have been so strong in monastic communities and at universities, and the circulation of texts so international, that a fresh study of local sources would most likely yield further manuscript treatises in all of these countries. We therefore decided to look for remnants of the art of memory in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. When Rafał Wójcik prepared his doctoral dissertation on the printed treatise of Jan Szklarek (1504),[68] he encountered a number of unedited treatises from Poland that had close connections to the Czech Republic and Hungary as well, and he suggested that research should be extended in these directions. Indeed, the libraries and archives of these three countries offered an unexpected wealth of material from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries on artificial memory and memorization in general, which is published in the following pages.

Farkas Gábor Kiss

[67] Spanish scholarship seems to focus on the 16th century: Luis Merino-Jerez, *Retórica y artes de memoria en el Humanismo renacentista (Jorge de Trebisonda, Pedro de Ravenna y El Brocense)*, (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 2007).

[68] Wójcik, *Opusculum*.